



HEADQUARTERS
DELTA MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND
USAAG, IV CTZ, APO 96215



25 June 1969

Dr. Dan Ellsberg
The Rand Corporation
Santa Monica, California

Dear Dan:

I would appreciate at least a note indicating whether or not you have received material from me since I am reluctant to send any more (such as the province reports) until I am sure they are getting through.

It looks like the arrangements on Colonel Chau's visit to Rand are not going to work out, i.e., I don't think the US Embassy is going to sanction his coming to the States under Rand auspices. They are apprehensive as to what he might say for public consumption and that this will be contrary to GVN, as well as US, objectives. Quite frankly, I believe it is another of these pussyfooting exercises wherein we continually bend over backwards and go to extreme limits to avoid any possible disagreement with GVN. As I have pointed out to those involved on the US side, if the GVN objected to Chau going to the US, it should be up to them to deny him clearance, not up to the US to assume that the GVN does not want him to go and that the US must do the GVN's dirty work.

Quite frankly, I am aware that Chau wants to come not only for a visit, but to get a job and to move his family to the US. I consider this most unfortunate since Chau, in his position as Secretary General of the Assembly, is wielding considerable influence and is a voice for moderation and the broadening of the potential political base of the government. He is now, as always, fiercely anti-Communist, but extremely apprehensive that the GVN will maintain an image (with US help) of an ultra right wing group dominated by Catholics and ex-Diemists. Chau points out this is a potential danger (to US objectives) if this image does persist under conditions of a ceasefire or internationally supervised elections. As he perceives it, we would then have a situation approaching that which existed in Tay Ninh and An Giang Provinces in the 1967 presidential elections. These provinces, Chau points out, were the most pacified in the country at that time and both provinces overwhelmingly rejected the government and went for Mr. Dzu, a peace candidate. Chau feels that under a ceasefire or an internationally controlled election, forces similar to those who went for Mr. Dzu in 1967 would rival the right wing elements of the Thieu government and that the better organized minority associated with the NLF might then achieve an unwarranted success. As Chau sees it, there is presently no prospect

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for a GVN policy of getting the majority, but splintered, Buddhist following organized in an anti-Communist role.

When I posed the question to Chau as to what the two governments should now do, he answered roughly as follows: There is no hope of building a real political organization within the next decade that is cohesive and anti-Communist. President Thieu's recent attempts resulted in only six of the many political factions agreeing to serve under his banner with three of these six being Catholic dominated and the remaining three being under considerable Catholic influence. Chau sees the only possible cohesive organization to be one which is based on an appeal to religious leadership and primarily Buddhist, Hoa Hao and Cao Dai leadership since Catholic leadership is already with the government. As a practical way of bringing this about, Chau would have President Thieu invite the leadership of all factions of each religion to confer with him so as to determine what compromises would be necessary to gain this religious support. He would follow the technique of offering to deal either separately or jointly with the various elements of each religious party, but would encourage these elements, if not merging, to at least establish a working relationship for achievement of common objectives. Chau thinks this is quite possible. He acknowledges that the price would not be low, but feels that the rewards would be high. He does not see any political purge required of present office holders, but does believe that amnesty would have to be granted to religious and non-Communist political leaders now jailed and some provision made for realistic participation in determining the destiny of the country.

Chau is of the belief that steps such as he has outlined will not be taken by President Thieu. He is convinced that the US policy will be to support Thieu without question or suggestion and thereby insure that the Thieu government remains in power as long as there is a US presence, while at the same time, by this action, precluding the expansion of a political base for the GVN, thereby insuring eventual defeat for the GVN.

There are many variations and intricacies related to the above over-simplified explanation of Chau's position, but I don't have time to go into them nor am I sufficiently certain of my understanding of them. Needless to say, Chau is a very complex person and far and away the most knowledgeable and thoughtful of any Vietnamese I know. It would take weeks of expert interrogation and discussion to really understand Chau's picture of Vietnam. I am convinced, of course, that there are few studies which would prove so fruitful and, therefore, I deeply regret the fact that he may be denied the 30 days at Rand.

You are aware that the combination of Chau's brother being arrested in Saigon and identified as a "VC captain" together with Chau's infamous

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public suggestions on dealing with the NLF, have made him extremely unpopular with the GVN and vulnerable. At the same time, Chau's stock nationally, and particularly his potential eminence in a postwar neutralist Vietnam, makes him more important than ever. I am convinced that he should attempt to weather the storm here relying upon his immunity as an elected representative and slowing down on his public outbursts. This I have advised him to do. I believe he labors under the illusion that he could go to America and possibly convince key leaders there to support a different policy in Vietnam. I have tried to assure him that it will be most difficult to convince anyone to change current policies unless that change were merely to accelerate the withdrawal of US forces. I have also indicated to him that it may be difficult to even secure audiences to hear his views on Vietnam since there is now so little interest in anything other than disengagement.

I am going on leave to the States on the 14th of July. Presently, I am attempting to go through Paris, but I am running into bureaucratic blocks and may end up coming through Los Angeles instead. If so, I will let you know in advance. I do not plan to go to Washington on this trip other than passing through and on my way from Paris to Denver. In any case, I will come back through Los Angeles on/about 4 August and will arrange to get together with you then.

The war is going relatively well in the Delta and I was absolutely delighted that the first major US unit selected for outloading was the 9th Division. With the departure of its two brigades now in IV Corps in August, this will be an all Vietnamese ground effort in the Delta and an opportunity to evaluate effectively what happens in the critical provinces of Dinh Tuong and Kien Hoa when major US forces leave them. My prediction is that, contrary to expectations, the situation will actually improve within a year although I obviously expect some deterioration in the months immediately following the departure of the 9th. The situation in the Delta today wherein the GVN has gained that degree of control represented by a "C" security rating over an additional 1,200,000 people in the last year is the best example of the thinness of control of the VC. I continue to have the feeling that if we get 30 per cent effort of the GVN rather than a 20 per cent effort, it would be sufficient to successfully conclude the major military side of this conflict. Unfortunately, there is little prospect that we will get that much improvement, although we are getting, and will get, some.

I have just completed a reading of Portnoy's Complaint. I was interested in the technique used by Mr. Roth which, as far as I can analyze it was to write down 1,000 times every dirty word and/or synonym connected with sex, scatter all the words out, mix them thoroughly together and to put in a few connecting verbs. Despite the glowing reviews which indicated that a major psychiatric breakthrough will ensue from a study of this master(bates)piece, I am unable to appreciate its significance. To put it another way, it was boring and, contrary to my